

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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T U E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- + Secretary-General, in Washington, tells National Defense University seminar that ethnic conflict poses equal threat to world security as cold war; meets with United States Secretary of State and Congressional leaders.
- + Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, heading mission to El Salvador, says there have been some alarming developments in country recently, despite progress in implementing Peace Accords.
- + UNHCR says efforts on behalf of refugees must be targeted both at providing asylum and protection, and at safeguarding human rights so people need not seek protection outside their own countries.
- + Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali appoints Maxime Zollner, UNHCR West African Representative, as Special Representative for Burundi.
- + Secretary-General, in report to Security Council, says United Nations should play significant role in support of reconstruction of Lebanon.
- + Meeting to be convened in Geneva to discuss measures to ensure safety of humanitarian workers and personnel serving with UNPROFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bosnian leaders pledge support for efforts to improve security of convoys.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali last night warned that ethnic conflict posed as great a threat to world security as had the cold war. Opening a seminar on ethnic conflict at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., he stressed that no country could afford to ignore ethnic conflict. "Borders and oceans can no longer insulate people at home from the consequences of such violence abroad. 'Boat people' may become tomorrow a global problem," he said.

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The United Nations was the creation and instrument of its Member States, and if world leaders did not concern themselves with failed States, the entire fabric of international society could be weakened, he continued. Meeting the new challenge of ethnic conflict required the Organization, in its military role, to use a full range of techniques, including peace-keeping, preventive deployment and the use of observers.

This morning, the Secretary-General met with members of the House of Representatives from the Committees on Foreign Affairs, Armed Services, Appropriations and Intelligence. Among the issues discussed were the upcoming United States withdrawal from Somalia, the level of the country's assessed contributions for peace-keeping, management reform at the United Nations and Haiti. Meeting with the leadership of the House Appropriations Committee, the Secretary-General expressed the view that there should be wider and more balanced support among Member States for peace-keeping operations. He later met with Senate leaders.

Yesterday, the Secretary-General met with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and discussed Haiti, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and other matters. He was accompanied by Melissa Wells, Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, and Alvaro de Soto, his Senior Political Advisor.

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Much has been achieved in implementing the Peace Accords in El Salvador, but there have been some alarming developments recently, Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, told the press yesterday on his arrival in San Salvador. He is heading a four-person mission sent to the country by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and the Security Council in the wake of a series of murders of political leaders.

Mr. Goulding said that the mission would work with the Chief of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), Augusto Ramirez-Ocampo, the President of El Salvador and the leadership of the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN), on measures to ensure that the Peace Accords were implemented fully and peacefully, and in a time frame as close as possible to the one which was originally accepted.

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Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), briefing correspondents today on a report on the State of the World's Refugees, stressed the dual challenge of protecting those fleeing persecution and violence through the granting of asylum, and of insisting that States respect and safeguard fundamental human rights, so that people did not need to seek protection elsewhere.

Mrs. Ogata said that while donations for refugees last year totalled \$1.1 billion, only \$800 million had been received so far this year, against a budget of \$1.2 billion. While she rejected the term "donor fatigue", she

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foresaw a continuing drop in donations, given that all donor countries were in recession. Unfortunately, there was unlikely to be any lessening in the need for refugee assistance next year. She said she would like to see UNHCR be more involved in the pursuit of political solutions and with development efforts, to prevent the factors that gave rise to refugee crises.

With regard to sanctions, which could give rise to economic distress and population movements, Mrs. Ogata called for greater examination of ways to direct their impact to the right target so as not to punish those who did not deserve to be punished and who were generally the most vulnerable.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to appoint Maxime L. Zollner, West African Regional Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as his Special Representative for Burundi, with immediate effect. In a letter to the Security Council dated 8 November, he said the Special Representative would follow developments in the country, and continue consultations and coordination with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on ways to facilitate the restoration of constitutional rule there following last month's military coup.

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A spokesman for Thorvald Stoltenberg, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia, announced today that a meeting is to be convened in Geneva to discuss measures to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers and personnel serving with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The announcement followed a meeting today between Mr. Stoltenberg and Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic and Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban to review the situation regarding humanitarian convoys in Central Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Stoltenberg, at the request of the Secretary-General, suspended all convoys in the region following the attack on 25 October in which a United Nations driver was killed and a number of other workers were injured. According to the Board of Inquiry established by UNPROFOR, the driver's death was probably a homicide, with the shot having come from an area controlled by the Bosnian Government. Mr. Stoltenberg stressed that the relevant authorities should ensure that the person or persons responsible were arrested and brought to justice. According to a United Nations spokesman, Mr. Silajdzic and Mr. Boban had expressed deep regret over the driver's death, and had pledged their support for efforts to coordinate with UNPROFOR to improve the security of the convoys.

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